

Message Text

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ORIGIN HA-05

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 111014

HONG KONG ALSO PASS INS DIDIR

E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. ON INDOCHINESE
REFUGEES

1. DEREK VOLKER, FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY, GOA DEPARTMENT

OF IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS, DISCUSSED INDOCHINESE REFUGEE SITUATION, PARTICULARLY BOAT REFUGEES, WITH DEPT., INS, AND NSC OFFICIALS AND CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE STAFFERS APRIL 26 AND 27. VOLKER WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT BOAT REFUGEES ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA FROM COUNTRIES OF TEMPORARY ASYLUM SUCH AS MALAYSIA. HE COMMENTED THAT SUCH DIRECT ARRIVALS WERE COMING UNDER CRITICISM OF BOTH PUBLIC AND OPPOSITION POLITICIANS AND MIGHT ENDANGER AUSTRALIAN PROGRAM TO ACCEPT INDOCHINESE FROM COUNTRIES OF TEMPORARY ASYLUM.

2. AT END OF MEETING, AUSTRALIANS DRAFTED SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPT OFFICERS, WHICH WAS LEFT FOR COMMENT. WE HAVE NOW REVIEWED DRAFT AND MADE A FEW NON-SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES TO REFLECT WHAT IN OUR VIEW WAS ACTUAL TENOR OF DISCUSSIONS. WE ARE INFORMING AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HERE OF CHANGES, BUT REQUEST CANBERRA PRESENT FOLLOWING TEXT TO VOLKER AND INFORM DEPT IF THIS RECEIVES FINAL CLEARANCE.

3. BEGIN TEXT:

INDOCHINESE REFUGEES - DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICERS -
26-27 APRIL 1978

THE POINTS OF AGREEMENT INCLUDED:
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(1) THE NEED FOR CONCERTED EFFORTS TO AVOID UNAUTHORISED ARRIVALS IN AUSTRALIA BY INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEES.

(2) THE NECESSITY FOR COORDINATED, ORDERLY AND RAPID PROCESSING OF BOAT REFUGEES AT VARIOUS POINTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO HELP STABILISE THE SITUATION.

(3) DUAL U.S. AND AUSTRALIAN APPROACHES TO THAILAND, MALAYSIA, AND INDONESIA -

(A) ASSURING THEM THAT BOAT REFUGEES (WITH LIMITED EXCEPTIONS AS DISCUSSED) WILL BE RESETTLED IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

(B) REQUESTING THEM TO ALLOW BOAT REFUGEES TO LAND AND REMAIN IN THEIR COUNTRIES PENDING PROCESSING FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT ELSEWHERE,

(C) CONFIRMING THAT ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO ENSURE COORDINATED PROMPT PROCESSING AND ORDERLY ONWARD MOVEMENT OF BOAT REFUGEES IN

THEIR COUNTRIES,

(D) SUGGESTING THAT THEY TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO DISSUADE AND PREVENT REFUGEES FROM CONTINUING TO AUSTRALIA WITHOUT PRIOR AUTHORITY. THIS COULD INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACTING TO IMPOUND ARRIVING BOATS.

(4) THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES BE REQUESTED: TO ASSURE THE PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE THAT SATISFACTORY COORDINATED ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROMPT PROCESSING AND RESETTLEMENT OF BOAT REFUGEES HAVE BEEN MADE; TO RAISE WITH HIM THAT SINGAPORE RECEIVE BOAT REFUGEES ARRIVING ON THE ASSURANCE THAT THEY WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

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RESETTLED ELSEWHERE AND TO TAKE UP HIS OFFER TO PROVIDE A FACILITY WHERE BOAT REFUGEES CAN BE LOCATED FOR PROCESSING. FOLLOWING THIS APPROACH BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, DUAL APPROACHES BE MADE BY U.S. AND AUSTRALIA CONFIRMING IN GENERAL THEIR PREPAREDNESS TO RESETTLE REFUGEES

ALLOWED TEMPORARY SANCTUARY IN SINGAPORE.

(5) UNHCR

UNHCR TO BE APPROACHED BY U.S. AND AUSTRALIA TO:

(A) INCREASE STAFFING AND RESOURCES IN MALAYSIA, PARTICULARLY, AND IN THAILAND WITH REPRESENTATIVES TO BE LOCATED AT PRINCIPAL BOAT ARRIVAL POINTS;

(B) PLACE A REPRESENTATIVE IN INDONESIA;

(C) ENSURE MORE EFFECTIVE DIRECTION OF ACTIVITIES RELATING TO INDOCHINESE REFUGEES AND ENCOURAGING THE ONGOING SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF COUNTRIES OF INITIAL ASYLUM.

(6) COMMISSIONER TO MAKE SELECTIVE APPEAL TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO:

(A) RESETTLE MORE REFUGEES (AUSTRALIA TO APPROACH CANADA TO SPEED UP THEIR PROCESSING AND MOVEMENT OF BOAT PEOPLE);

(B) MAKE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNHCR BUDGET FOR THE PRESENT INDOCHINESE
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REFUGEE PROGRAM;

(C) MAKE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, AS REQUIRED, FOR PROPOSED PERMANENT SETTLEMENT SCHEME IN THAILAND FOR LAND REFUGEES.

(COUNTRIES TO BE APPROACHED INCLUDE JAPAN, ECC.)

(7) FURTHER CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND AUSTRALIA TO DEVELOP COORDINATED MECHANISM FOR PROCESSING REFUGEES. INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

(A) ESTABLISHMENT IN MALAYSIA OF, PERHAPS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNHCR OR ICEM, CENTRAL MEDICAL FACILITY FOR EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT;

(B) COORDINATE IN COUNTRY MOVEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES IN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA UNDER THE UNHCR;

(C) REGULAR CONSULTATIONS AT LOCAL LEVELS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA BY OUR REPRESENTATIVES;

(D) PERIODIC MEETINGS OF SENIOR OFFICIALS TO REVIEW PERFORMANCE AND PROCEDURES;

(E) CONSIDERATION TO BE GIVEN TO OFFERING OTHER COUNTRIES BACK-STOP SERVICES OF COORDINATED U.S./AUSTRALIAN PROCESSING (MEDICAL, SECURITY CHECKS, DOSSIERS) AS INCENTIVE TO RESETTLE REFUGEES.

(8) BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. S. LOWMAN TO VISIT AUSTRALIA AFTER U.S. PAROLE AUTHORITY RECEIVED.

(9) UNHCR TO TAKE LEAD IN ARRANGING MULTILATERAL DISCUSSIONS IN JUNE OR JULY IN BANGKOK OR KUALA LUMPUR CON-

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CERNING INDOCHINESE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AFTER UNHCR VISIT TO THE AREA. U.S. AND AUSTRALIA TO INDICATE TO HIGH COMMISSIONER COMMITMENT TO SEND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO CONFERENCE.

(10) U.S. PREPAREDNESS TO ACCEPT ALL BOAT PEOPLE NOT APPROVED FOR ENTRY TO OTHER COUNTRIES WITHIN LIMITS OF

PAROLE AUTHORITY.

(11) THE UNITED STATES WILL ACCEPT BOAT REFUGEES ARRIVING DIRECTLY IN AUSTRALIA:

(A) ALREADY APPROVED FOR ENTRY TO THE U.S.

(B) IN CATEGORIES 1 AND 2 OF U.S. CRITERIA.

(C) ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS ADDITIONAL REFUGEES CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH U.S.; E.G., THOSE WHO HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICES OR WERE EDUCATED OR TRAINED IN U.S. SCHOOLS OR INSTALLATIONS OR UNDER U.S. AUSPICES.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

. THAT AUSTRALIA CONCENTRATE PREDOMINATELY ON RESETTLING BOAT REFUGEES AND CONSIDER COMMITMENT TO TAKE UP TO ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL BOAT REFUGEES.

. THE UK TO BE APPROACHED TO RESETTLE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES EX HONG KONG.

. COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA NOT SIGNATORIES TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AND PROTOCOL RELATING TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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STATUS OF REFUGEES BE APPROACHED TO DO SO. THE PHILIPPINES MIGHT BE BEST PROSPECT.

. POSSIBILITY OF A UN (HIGH) COMMISSIONER FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES BE KEPT IN MIND.

END TEXT

4. FOLLOWING MEETING, GOA EMBASSY ALSO PREPARED STATEMENT FOR RELEASE TO PRESS APRIL 28 ON IF-ASKED BASIS REGARDING VOLKER DISCUSSIONS. STATEMENT WAS CLEARED WITH DEPT. FOLLOWING IS TEXT:

A SENIOR OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS FROM CANBERRA HAS BEEN IN WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION ON THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE SITUATION. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WAS GIVEN TO BOAT PEOPLE AND TO FURTHER ACTION TO COORDINATE THE EFFORTS OF THE U.S., AUSTRALIA, OTHER GOVERNMENTS, AND AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES TO SPEED UP THE PROCESSING AND MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES TO COUNTRIES OF PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT. IT WAS NOTED THAT

THE CONTINUED INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO RESETTLE INDOCHINESE
REFUGEES FROM THE CAMPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA MADE IT UNNEC-
ESSARY FOR REFUGEES TO ATTEMPT THE HAZARDOUS VOYAGE TO
AUSTRALIA. IT WAS AGREED THAT FURTHER CONSULTATIONS
WOULD BE HELD.

END TEXT. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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